ACRES OF CROPS PLANTEI

	NAME OF OCCUPANT WHETHER OWNER OR RENTER	POST OFFICE	Total acres in farm	Acres in crops including tame hay	Acres plow land in pasture	Acres cleared since April 1, 1917	Acres drained since Apr. 1, 1917	Silos Number	Bees colonies Number	All corn Acres
	TOTALS FROM PREVIOUS PAGE		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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	TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD		1	2	3	4	5	6		

	NAME OF OCCUPANT WHETHER OWNER OR RENTER	POST OFFICE	Total acres in farm	Acres in crops including tame hay	Acres plow land in pasture	Acres cleared since April 1, 1917	Acres drained since Apr. 1, 1917	Silo Num		
	TOTALS FROM PREVIOUS PAGE		1	2	3	4	5	6		
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	TOTALS CARRIED FORWARD		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Bureau of Crop Estimates.

F. A. No. 326.

January 24, 1919.

MEMORANDUM FOR FIELD AGENTS.

SINCE the Bureau of Crop Estimates entered into an agreement with the State Department of Agriculture of Wisconsin for a cooperative State crop reporting servide, so many inquirées have been received from field agents and from State Commissioners of Agriculture regarding the advantages of such an arrangement, the form of agreement, and the modification of state laws or the enactment of new legislation that might be recommended, that several months ago I asked Dr. S. A. Jones, Chief of the Field Service, to prepare a statement covering these points. It is believed that the information contained in the following memorandum by Dr. Jones will prove useful in many States.

Marked improvement has resulted in the crop reporting service in those States in which the Bureau has already entered into formal cooperative agreements with State Departments of Agriculture (Wisconsin, Missouri, Ohio, Nebraska and Utah). Officials in many other States have the subject under consideration. Wherever the cooperative scheme has been tried it has proved satisfactory to both sides, resulting in improved service, the elimination of duplication of effort and a saving of unnecessary expense.

Leon M. Estabrook,

Chief of Bureau.

STUDY OF STATE LAWS RELATING TO COLLECTION, THROUGH ASSESSORS, OF CROP ACREAGES, ETC.

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STUDY OF STATE LAWS RELATING TO COLLECTION,

THROUGH ASSESSORS, OF CROP ACREAGES, ETC.

FOREWORD.

The duty of the Bureau of Crop Estimates of the United States Department of Agriculture, to collect and publish statistics of agriculture, a work that has been carried on systematically, for more than half a century (since 1862), and imperfectly back to 1839, makes it a clearing house for such information regarding each state, and brings it into contact with the agencies in the different states established to perform a similar service for the individual state.

The Bureau's published estimates have been largely on the basis of the state as a unit, but the demand for such data for the districts and counties within the state, has of recent years become so insistent, and its need so patent, that the Bureau has felt itself compelled to take steps to establish its work upon the county basis. This demand has also impressed itself upon state officials, even in states which have hitherto neglected all work along this line, and great strides forward have been taken in many states, while interest is active in almost all of them. As a result the Bureau has received many requests for information and suggestions regarding methods of collecting state statistics of agriculture. Its own interest in the valuable data collected in certain states, through the medium of the assessors, which, in addition to their own distinct worth, have proven extremely useful in checking the Bureau's estimates, has led it to investigate the forms and workings of the different state laws on this subject. The evident need for such information constrains the Bureau to offer in this paper a brief summary of typical state laws and practices, with explanatory comments and suggestions, thought likely to be helpful to state officials and others interested in this subject.

NEED FOR CROP STATISTICS.

This is a business age, resting upon science, which latter has been defined as knowledge classified. Agriculture is rapidly being organized and systematized. The industry as a whole and in its various phases is passing to a business basis, as distinguished from the traditional, routine, hit and miss, method of the past. The problems of both production and marketing are being carefully studied by many trained and able investigators, connected with various public agencies interested in agriculture, and by an increasingly large proportion of the farmers themselves.

The problems of agriculture must be solved in the main in exactly the same way as are the problems of other industries, by the study of records of past performance in connection with present prospects and future possibilities. No large business can be properly conducted without records, nor can the great business of farming so succeed in its due measure. Agricultural statistics are the records of that industry, upon which its future must be forecast.

Agriculture is a great industry, the greatest in most counties, and its success or failure is the measure of the county's prosperity; hence the wide demand for information concerning the changes in crop acreages, the portion of the area under cultivation to each crop, the growing condition and promised outturn of the present crops, the average yield realized and prices received, and the numbers and values of different classes of live stock.

Not only are farmers interested, because of the influence of such facts upon their plantings and marketings, but men in other lines of business, as manufacturers, dealers, bankers and investors, having a present or prospective interest in a county or state, must, for the proper conduct of their business, have knowledge of the facts that affect the prosperity, and hence

The agricultural situation very largely guides business men in determining the volume of supplies to be manufactured, stocks of goods to be carried, amount of credit to be extended, etc. Large business and financial concerns usually obtain such data through their representatives and associates, through commercial crop reporting agencies, and through the investigations of paid agents. The farmer and the local business man, on the other hand, are handicapped by their lack of agents to keep them informed of the general situation, and by their limited knowledge concerning, and lack of confidence in, commercial crop reporting agencies. They are also often hempered, rather than helped, by their intimate touch with the local condition, which profoundly influences their opinion, although it may, and often does, differ from conditions generally. Yet the general condition in the county, state, or nation, more frequently fixes the price of the local crop, than does the local condition.

For the determination of questions of public policy, both county and state, knowledge of the agriculture of the county and state for the past years, and information concerning the present, is necessary because of its bearing upon the future. Such facts form the logical basis for the enactment or modification of state laws for the promotion of agriculture. These laws, as well as the activities of state and county agricultural leaders, will often prove to be misdirected or even harmful when based on mere opinion, unsupported by definite and dependable knowledge of the past history and present status of the industry.

Agricultural statistics are important and essential to the farmer in the marketing of his crops intelligently and to the best financial advantage.

Farmers should be able to get prompt information at the time they begin to harvest, in order to determine whether to sell from the field, or store. Examples; potatoes, apples, and cotton.

The more accurate the crop reports are, the more valuable they are to the farmer. The dealer in or buyer of agricultural products is able to operate on a much smaller margin where he can base his purchases upon dependable reports. Where he is uncertain as to the production or probable production, he must of necessity have a larger margin of profit to protect himself.

The interests of the farmer and small dealer are identical. Competition compels the local dealer ordinarily to pay the highest prices the market will stand and accurate crop data enable him to determine such prices and work on the smallest margin of profit.

Without official reports farmers would be entirely at the mercy of the large handlers and dealers who could issue reports favoring their plans and depress or raise prices to suit their own needs, depending upon whether they were short or long on the market.

Regular collection of agricultural statistics permits information to be presented in such a way that the ordinary man can, by studying reports, make comparisons with previous years, in order to draw proper conclusions.

Definite detailed county information is valuable to development bureaus, furnishing authentic information from year to year of the growth of agriculture in the different counties. It enables the prospective settler to determine the locality which he would prefer, by knowing the relative production of the various crops in the different counties. It affords to county agricultural agents a foundation for intelligent work and enables him to check up the results of his work. It enables railroads to distribute their cars intelligently and to study the agricultural development in different counties in its bearing upon the extension of existing railroad lines.

BASIS OF CROP REPORTS AND ESTIMATES.

Practically all crop estimates for large areas are based necessarily upon the application of the law of averages to data obtained by some method of sampling, i.e., by averaging sample areas. Crop reports for a state are usually based upon reports from a well distributed corps of voluntary observers, mostly farmers, whose business makes them keenly interested in and attentive to the changes in the area needed and in the growing conditions and prospective yields of the different crops. Accepting these returns as representative samples of the existing conditions in the state as a whole, and trusting to the law of averages to iron out the irregularities of individual bias and error and of abnormal local factors, it is possible to determine by camparison of the resulting figures with similar figures at the same dates in previous years and by a study of the resulting crop yields to determine the yield in prospect, assuming average conditions to harvest. So also for the final determination of yields at the close of the season and the great majority of related problems.

An average made up of reports from a large number of reasonably well informed parties is accurate to an extraordinary degree if the subject of investigation is a matter of which they have present personal knowledge, such as growing conditions of crops, yields at harvest time, wages current, quality of products being marketed, prices being paid, and so forth, and providing there is no occasion for bias. Or, assuming the reports to be subject to bias, they are dependable ordinarily if they are compared with identical reports relating to a former period in which the same measure is used, as for instance, "condition" of crops which is stated in comparison with the normal condition for the locality at the same date in a normal year.

If the reporter's viewpoint is wrong, if his understanding of the term used is faulty, if he is by nature optomistic or the reverse, or if he consciously misstates the facts to his presumed advantage, no materially ill result befalls the average because the same considerations will have influenced him in making both reports, and the comparison between the two periods will be a fair one. Though the bias of individual reporters may vary, that of a large group ordinarily will remain practically constant, the change by one being offset by that of another in the opposite direction , just as the law of chance will equalize other errors in the report, not due to bias.

But to determine the important question of total crop production an essential fact is the acreage planted, and it is impossible to arrive at satisfactory conclusions regarding acreage changes by the method of general inquiry described. In reporting concerning acreage changes for the locality, the reporter labors under two handicaps. The first is that of a changing unit of measure, namely, the acreage of the past year, which in successive years may vary any degree, from large to small; the second, that of being compelled to rely upon his memory for that shifting year old basis.

The average intelligent reporter is entirely human in being forgetful, and also human in being conservative, so that he will both forget the full deviation of the previous year from an ordinary full acreage and discount the extent of deviation that he thinks he does remember. As a result, such reports fail to follow adequately the full extent of changes in acreage. Similar causes affect the accuracy of reports on numbers of live stock, in comparison with the previous year, taken as a basis. This is particularly true of the meat animals, especially swine, which can and do change very rapidly in numbers, in response to the supply and price of

foodstuffs and the market demand and prices for such animals. Many other factors, too numerous and complicated to discuss in this paper, render the results doubtful, and the greater the change in crop acreage or in the numbers of live stock, the greater the probability and extent of error. As the acreage must ordinarily be determined by comparison with the accepted acreage of the previous year, beginning with the census enumeration, an error, if due to a permanent bias in the original reports, is likely to be cumulative, so that a deviation of say two per cent in each single year, might pile up an error of about twenty per cent in the interval of ten years from one federal census to another.

The problem of acreage is only partly solved with the help of data subsequently available, sometimes after a considerable period, regarding commercial movement of farm products, such as cotton ginnings, rice millings, thrashings, receipts at country elevators and mills, and railroad shipments, supplemented by the study of the acreage changes on many thousands of individual farms. Utilizing all of these means and all others that offer assistance, taking advantage of special farm surveys, and expending much effort in personal field investigations by its paid agents in each state, the Bureau can at best be only reasonably confident of the accuracy of its acreage estimates.

While the Bureau's sources of information are much more extensive and complete than those of any other agency and its conclusions, because of its special facilities and impartial attitude, may be expected to approximate the facts closely, and are, in fact, found to deviate from the actual production of major crops usually within the narrow margin of two or three per cent for the country as a whole, such a degree of accuracy can not be hoped for in the case of individual states or counties, except where annual basic acreage data are available.

The most satisfactory check, and the greatest help toward accuracy of crop estimates, is an annual enumeration of the acreage planted, and of the number of head of different classes of live stock, on each individual farm; in other words, a yearly census. A federal census is extremely tedious and expensive, due to the necessity for personal visitation, and is only made at decade intervals. Fortunately in most states provision is made for such annual personal visitation to each farm in the listing of property for taxation. By taking advantage of this fact the added expense of securing some additional statistical facts concerning acreage, etc., is trifling, and in a number of states this is now being done. These responses give in most cases the nearest approach to facts possible, short of a regular federal census, and when promptly assembled into county and state totals, furnish a dependable check on the preliminary estimates of acreage, permitting necessary revision in the final estimates for the year. While there is a tendency for farmers to understate actual production to the assessor, this tendency is much slighter with regard to acreage and is quite constant, so that the extent of change is reflected with close accuracy. Fortunately, due to the operation of the law of averages, it is relatively easy to estimate very accurately the average yield of a crop, so that once the acreage is determined accurately, very close estimates of total production can be made.

STATISTICAL WORK OF STATE COVERED BY THIS STUDY.

The call by the farming interests for information concerning the crop prospects and outturn , to guide producers in judging of future prices and to assist them in marketing their produce and in planning their future plantings, has led many states to establish agencies for this purpose.

By common consent and for many years, the statistics on the agriculture of Kansas, issued by the state department of agriculture, have en-

joyed a deserved preeminence among state reports, that state having begun such reports early in her history, about 1866, established them firmly by law in 1875, and carried them on through the subsequent years with very slight changes, a most important factor, insuring the comparability of the present reports with those of prior years. A number of other states, notably Ohio, have complete records covering long periods.

The creditable showing by Kansas may be ascribed in part to the exceptional interest and energy of her commissioners of agriculture, but, since commissioners of the highest type in some other states have not succeeded in any like measure, it may be assumed that the Kansas laws governing this work were wisely drawn, and are deserving of careful study.

The state of Wisconsin has within the past two years established, in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Crop Estimates, a crop reporting service at least the peer of any other and for that reason the laws of that state, under which the basic acreage data are collected with remarkable completeness, are given place immediately after those of Kansas.

The State of Ohio has collected statistics through assessors for very many years and has assembled a very considerable body of valuable state date extending back to 1858, its earlier reports being in fact among the earliest comprehensive statistical records of agriculture. Under the present state secretary of agriculture great improvements have been affected and these statistics are being utilized to the benefit of the state in greater measure than heretofore. A cooperative relation with the Federal Bureau of Crop Estimates has recently been established. Under this arrangement a trained man , familiar with the state, will have charge of the tabulation and analysis of the assessor's returns. The laws of this state are considered third in order.

North Dakota has had for several years a law modeled after that of Kansas but containing valuable provisions of its own, which render it theoretically one of the best. Unfortunately, unwillingness on the part of many farmers to furnish the information required and failure to apply the legal remedies to secure compliance with its requirements, has prevented the state and its producers from realizing the full benefit contemplated by the law. Its excellence in the abstract prompts its assignment to fourth place in this study.

Nebraska has an imperfect law which is quoted fifth, its principal credit being its brevity, a very real advantage if coupled with other merits. The state department has done valuable work with this defective law, and has recently pooled forces with the Bureau of Crop Estimates in a joint service.

The Utah law, given next, is also faulty, but is being utilized by the state department to best advantage pending improvement. That state also is cooperating with the Bureau of Crop Estimates in a joint service.

The State of Missouri has done most helpful work through its state board of agriculture in the collection and dissemination of crop data, without any special law, proceeding under the general authorization contained in the law establishing the board of agriculture. The board's efforts have necessarily been largely along the line of estimating on the basis of returns from lists of voluntary reporters. A proper law for collection of acreages through the assessors will probably be passed at the coming session of the legislature, having passed one house at the last session.

The various laws mentioned will indicate the types prevailing in states that are producing creditable results in this field.

The references following to state secretary of agriculture, county auditor, township assessor, etc. will, of course, apply to the officer or

office having similar duties in states somewhat differently organized.

STUDY OF TYPICAL STATE LAWS.

For convenience in studying them , sections of the different state laws relating to the same topic are brought together under the following subject heads.

I. Duties of assessors and other county officers.
II. What statistics to be collected.
III. Blanks and instructions.
IV. Compensation to assessors.
V. Penalties for neglect.
VI. Duty of state department regarding publications.
VII. Drafts of complete state laws.

Under the different subjects, the state laws are first quoted with explanatory remarks, followed by comments and outline drafts of sections, the latter being intended to serve primarily as a basis for the preparation of amendments to existing state laws in which these particular features may be lacking or in need of improvement.

SUBJECT I

Duty of assessors and other county officials in connection with collecting, assembling and forwarding to state department, statistics relating to agriculture.

Kansas

"Chapter 15, Section 679, Duty to take census. The assessors are hereby required***to collect all other statistical information within their respective townships relating to agriculture, ***in the manner provided for in this Act, and specified in the instructions which shall be given by the state board of agriculture, and to return the same to the state board of agriculture on or before the first day of September next ensuing."

"Section 682. Each assessor shall perform the service required of him by a personal visit to each dwelling house, and to each family in his township or city and shall ascertain by inquiries made of some member of each family, if any one can be found capable of giving information, but if not then of the agents of such family, and if the agents cannot be found, then he shall obtain the information from the most reliable source***and shall also visit personally the farms***respecting which information is required.*** The memoranda so taken shall be read to the person or persons furnishing the facts, to correct errors and supply omissions, if any shall exist."

"Section 684!" (In part) "The***statistics required to be taken by the assessors and returned to the office of the state board of agriculture, shall be taken by the assessors annually, their accuracy verified by the affidavit of the assessor taking the same, and returned and delivered to the county clerk on or before the first day of July of each year, who shall copy the same on blanks furnished by the state board of agriculture, make the proper footings, certify to the accuracy of such copy and footings, and transmit the same to the board of agriculture within thirty days thereafter."

Wisconsin

"1. It shall be the duty of the assessor of each village, city, town, or county, at the time of making the annual assessment of property, to collect such statistics in relation to the principal farm products and agricultural resources as may be required by the department of agriculture. Such tabulation of

statistics shall be forwarded to the department of agriculture on the date of the meeting of the town board of review, but not later than July fifteenth and a summary thereof, in duplicate, shall be delivered at the same time to the town clerk, one of said duplicates to be forwarded without delay to the county clerk."

This law was passed in 1917.

Ohio.

"Section 3356. Annually, at the time of taking the lists of personal property for taxation, the assessor shall require and take for each person, company and corporation in his township or precinct verified by oath, the statements for the preceding year following:***"

"Section 3357. At the time he returns the lists of personal property for taxation, the assessor shall make returns of all such statistics to the county auditor. On or before the first day of August, each year, the county auditor shall make return to the auditor of the state of all statistics returned to his office, except those statistics under the head of "agriculture", which he shall return to the secretary of the state board of agriculture, on or before the tenth day of July, each year, and the secretary of agriculture shall compile and publish them in the monthly crop and stock bulletins and annual report issued by the state department of agriculture."

"Section 1097. The assessing officers shall furnish to the secretary of agriculture upon request from him, upon blanks furnished by him, such information as may be in their possession or may be obtained by them relative to agriculture, agricultural labor, waste and uncultivated lands, undeveloped resources and decrease of rural population, within their respective townships. Such information shall be obtained as nearly as possible by each assessing officer while engaged in the performance of his other official duties."

The first paragraphs, Sections 3356 and 3357, are from the old law, the last, section 1097, was passed by the last legislature, and gives the secretary of agriculture rather broad permission to call for information through assessors, but slight power to require it, the assessing officer being quit upon simple declaration that he has complied to the best of his ability.

North Dakota.

"Section 1903. It shall be the duty of the several county, township, city and village assessors of this state at the time of listing property for taxation each year to require each person, firm, company and corporation in his assessor district to make statistical statement of facts relating to agriculture, horticulture, stock raising and such other subjects as may be required by the state statistician, in the manner provided for herein and specified in the instructions given by the state statistician, and each assessor shall make such other statistical returns, not herein mentioned, as may be required by the state statistician, of and through the county auditor, and each assessor shall make a return of such statements in tabulated form to the county auditor at the time of returning the lists of property for taxation. Such statement shall be made under oath by the persons or by the managers or agents of the firms, companies or corporations, and if any such person refused or neglects to make such statement under oath, it shall be the duty of the assessor to obtain such information to the best of his ability from the neighbors or others that may be supposed to be the best prepared to furnish it, which information so obtained the assessor shall indicate how procured and whether he has reason to believe the same to be reliable. Each assessor shall make an alphabetical list of names of the persons refusing to make such statements, with their post-office addresses, which list he shall return to the county auditor."

"Section 1908. Each assessor shall perform the services required of him by a personal visit to each dwelling house and to each family in his township, district, city or village and shall secure the information which he is required to ascertain by inquiries made of some member of each family, if any can be found capable of giving the information, but, if not, then he shall obtain such information from the most reliable source; and he shall personally visit the farm, shops and other places in the district, respecting which information is required, as specified on the blanks furnished him by the state statistician, and he shall obtain all information from the best and most reliable sources. The county auditor shall furnish to each assessor in his county such blanks as may be necessary for taking such statements, which blanks shall be furnished by the state statistician to the county auditors, together with printed instructions explaining the duties of the assessor in collecting the statistics aforesaid; and the county auditor shall, within ten days after such statements are returned to him, make out a duplicate tabular statement thereof, properly verified, one copy of which shall be preserved in the office of the county auditor and the other forwarded by registered mail to the state statistician. In case such statement is not received by the state statistician on or before the twentieth day of July of each year he shall report such fact in writing to the attorney-general, who shall notify such county auditor in writing

of such delinquency, and if such county auditor neglects or refuses to forward such statement on or before the first day of August, then the attorney-general shall at once proceed to enforce the penalties provided in section 1907 of the Compiled Laws of North Dakota for 1913."

Nebraska.

"Section 60.--Duty of Assessors--At the time of the assessment of property for taxation for state and county purposes, it shall be the duty of the county, township and precinct assessors to enroll the names of all persons over twenty-one years of age, occupied in farming, with time employed and amount of wages earned, together with the present acreage and crops to which their several farms are planted, and the number and the kind of animals kept thereon."

"Section 61.--Reports by County Clerks--It shall be the duty of the county clerk on or before the first day of July in each year to forward a summary of such reports of their respective counties to the secretary of the state board of agriculture at Lincoln, who shall compile said reports and embody them in his annual report to the Governor."

Field Agent states "This law is not very satisfactory. It appears that those farmers under twenty-one years of age are exempt."

Utah.

"2427 X 7. County assessor to get statements. Blank form. Each county assessor, or his deputies, at the time of taking lists of property for taxation in each year, shall require each person, company and corporation in his county or district to make s statistical statement of the previous year, as indicated on blanks furnished by the bureau,***.

" ***The county assessor shall return such statements to the state bureau of statistics on or before the first day of July of each year."

Comments.

The section or paragraph, laying upon the assessing officer the duty while making assessments of collecting at the same time statistics of agriculture, is the essential feature.

The original Kansas law contemplated an exhaustive census, and certain of these features, which were subsequently dropped from the law, as well as details concerning matters not germain to this study, have been omitted from the sections of this and other laws stated. The Kansas law has the merit of covering the ground fully.

The assessment is taken in Kansas and most other states rather too early in the spring to permit the farmer to answer positively as to his final acreages, although ordinarily his plans will be matured and perhaps part of his planting done, and the subsequent changes will be small in an ordinary season, and easily determined and allowed for by an active state department such as exists in Kansas.

The time allowed in Kansas for forwarding returns to the department of agriculture is longer than desirable, if prompt benefit is to be gotten from them, but probably not longer than necessary in view of what is required of the assessor and other county officials in that state.

The Kansas law seems to contemplate separate schedules for each farm and this is the practice in several states. This is unnecessary and cumbersome, if the data are collected primarily for the state department of agriculture. The original idea was apparently that the cou ty would desire the detailed data for its own uses, but as a complete summary for the township can be furnished by the assessor, there seems no real necessity for all the detailed work of entering on separate schedules and later copying to tabulation sheets for summary.

Such a law makes it necessary that these individual schedules for each farm be assembled, transcribed and summarized by some county agency, as it would be manifestly impossible to handle all of them in the state office within proper limits of time. Where proper blanks, carrying township summaries, are provided for original entry and the material is sent by the assessor directly to the state department, errors are lessened and greater uniformity is secured. The assessor can simply total his sheets and mail them in to the state office, valuable weeks and even months being saved. This subject is considered more fully under Subject III.

First hand collection of data by personal visitation to each property seems highly desirable, and a requirement for this might be included in the draft if not covered by the existing general laws defining the duties of the assessor, as also that he shall secure the facts from other sources if they cannot be obtained from the producer direct.

As to personal farm visitation, however, if this is not required by the present assessment laws, it may be inexpedient to attempt to compel such visitation if such a change would arouse the antagonism of the assessors or others, and prevent the enactment of any law requiring collection of statistics, or interfere with the execution of such a law or secure its repeal after being placed on the statute books.

Draft.

It shall be the duty of each township (county, village, town) assessor of this state at the time of listing property for taxation each year, to ascertain for each farm or property in his assessor district the facts relating to agriculture, horticulture and stock raising as specified and in the manner provided herein and in the instructions given by the state secretary of agriculture, including such other related statistical returns, not herein mentioned, as may be required by the secretary of agriculture.

Each assessor shall gather the statistics mentioned in section ___ by a personal visit to each farm or property in his township and by a personal interview with the owner or operator, or with his manager or agent if any can be found, but, if not, then he shall obtain such information from the most reliable source. The completed entries should be read back to the informant, to detect errors if present.

The statistical returns referred to herein shall be collected by the assessor as specified in blanks and instructions furnished by the state secretary of agriculture through the county auditor and shall be returned by the assessor direct to the said state secretary immediately upon completion of his assessments and in no case later than_____, a summary of same being at the same time delivered by the assessor to the township clerk and one to the county auditor.

SUBJECT II.

Data to be collected.

Kansas.

"Section 680. Schedules, Contain what. The instructions mentioned in the last section shall require schedules properly classified, and among other things shall contain the following:
Agriculture: Name of person managing farm; size of farm; quantity of land under cultivation; quantity of land under fence; acreage of the principal crops,***value of farm; value of farming implements; number of different kinds of live stock; number and value of slaughtered animals."

Wisconsin.

"Such statistics in relation to the principal farm products and agricultural resources as may be required by the department of agriculture."

See full paragraph under Subject I.

Ohio.

"Section 3356.***Agriculture: The number of sheep killed by dogs, their value, and the number of sheep injured by dogs, and the estimate of the amount of damages by such injury; the number of acres put in wheat, rye, barley, corn, oats, and buckwheat, and the number of bushels of each produced; the number of acres in timothy and other grass, except clover, and the number of tons of grass and bushels of seed produced therefrom; the number of acres in clover, the number of tons of hay made therefrom, and the number of bushels of seed obtained therefrom, and the number of acres of clover plowed under for manure; the number of acres planted in tobacco, and the number of pounds obtained therefrom; the number of acres put in flax, the number of pounds of fiber gathered, and the number of bushels of seed obtained; the number of acres planted in sorgo, the number of gallons of sirup, and pounds of sugar manufactured; the number of pounds of maple sugar, and the number of gallons of maple sirup manufactured; the number of pounds, each, of butter and cheese manufactured; the number of acres planted in potatoes, and the number of bushels produced; the number of acres in vineyard, the number of acres planted within the year, the number of pounds of grapes gathered, and the number of gallons of wine produced; the number of pounds of wool shorn; the number of acres in orchard, and the number of bushels of apples, peaches, cherries, plums, and pears produced; the number of acres used for pasturage, and the number of acres not cultivated or pastured; the number of hives of bees, and the number of pounds of honey produced; the number of dozens of eggs shipped to places beyond the state; the number of acres sowed, planted or to be sowed in wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, and potatoes, for the harvest of the then present year."

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"Section 1097." (In part). "***such information as may be in their possession or may be obtained by them (assessors) relative to agriculture, agricultural labor, waste and uncultivated lands, undeveloped resources and decrease in rural population within their respective townships".

See full paragraph under Subject I.

North Dakota.

"Section 1904. The statistical statement mentioned in the foregoing section shall contain among other things, answers properly classified to the following questions:

What is the number of farms. The number of acres cultivated or to be cultivated to crop for the current year, together with the acreage and product for the year immediately preceding, of wheat, oats, barley, flax, corn, rye, potatoes, cultivated and wild hay, and other farm produce.

The number of mules, horses, milch cows and other cattle, sheep and hogs, subdivided into their breed or classes to which they belong.

The number of pounds of wool clipped, and the dairy products for the past year.

The number and kind of trees grown in cultivated or planted forests.

The number of nurseries and the acreage of each.

The number and kinds of fruit trees, berries and vines, and the orchard products for the preceding year.

The male and female population of each county, township, city and village, and the number of blind, deaf and dumb, insane and idiotic in each assessor's district."

Note the requirement for "product" as well as acreage.

Nebraska.

"Section 60." (In part). "***names of all persons over twenty-one years of age, occupied in farming***together with the present acreage and crop to which their several farms are planted and the number and kind of animals kept thereon."

See full section under Subject I.

Utah.

"Section 2427 X 7." (In part). "Agriculture: Number of acres and production per acre of each kind of crop; number of acres of different kinds of pasture; number of fleeces of wool and average

weight of same; name of manager of farm; size of farm; quantity of land under fence; quantity of land not under fence; quantity of land under cultivation; assessed value of farm and farming implements; number of different kinds of live stock, poultry, stands of bees; amount of honey produced; number of acres of nurseries, orchards, and vineyards, with the production thereof and the amount of capital invested therein; number of mules, horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs, subdivided into the breeds or classes where they belong; number and value of slaughtered animals; canals, reservoirs, etc., constructed and the cost thereof; and such other agricultural information as shall be practicable in the discharge of their duties."

Comments.

The question immediately arises, shall the subjects of inquiry be distinctly specified or shall they be left to the judgment of the state official in charge of this work. In the first case, the legislature is not likely to be so well informed as the state secretary of agriculture concerning the most helpful subjects of inquiry nor so prompt to change them when need arises, in the second, successive secretaries, with differing views based on varying degrees of knowledge, vision and interest, may make such radical changes in the questions asked as to destroy the comparability and hence the value of the data for successive years.

The solution of the difficulty would appear to lie in a middle course, the law to require the acreage of each crop, this being the vital matter which should be a permanent subject of inquiry, and in addition such other facts regarding agriculture as the state secretary of agriculture may consider essential.

As to the questions themselves, additions to the simple list of crops for which acreages are asked should be as few as possible and only when necessary to develop facts essential to the well being of the state and its agricultural interests and not accessible through other channels.

All having experience in seeking information through the means of schedules of inquiry addressed to voluntary correspondents are aware of the difficulty of obtaining satisfactory responses if the inquiries are involved or made too numerous, or if they are difficult to answer offhand or upon brief reflection. It may be stated as a well proven rule that few and simple questions bring many and definite answers and conversely many and difficult questions bring few and vague responses.

The same difficulty is met with in the collection of data by enumeration, as through assessors. If the questions are multiplied or difficult, or if they are deemed inquisitorial, the farmer will evade or resent them, and the work being thus made disagreeable to the assessor will be slighted.

The question of number of acres planted to a crop can be answered practically offhand by a farmer, whereas the amount of a crop produced requires in most cases reflection, computation or reference to records, all consuming time and perhaps producing irritation, especially if thought likely to affect the tax rate.

Furthermore, questions of yield during the previous season can be determined by the means of extensive circularization shortly after harvest as discussed under "basis of crop reports" which method ordinarily will give equally as good results as a census, because the latter must be taken many months later when the facts have passed to some extent from the popular recollection.

Assessment is usually made in the early spring at a time when the farmer has made his plans for the seasons plantings, and has perhaps planted a part of the crops. A large proportion of the plantings are predetermined by established rotations of crops. Slight changes in the plans of individuals, due to causes affecting them personally but not the community at large, will usually about offset one another. No material change in the intended plantings is likely unless some very exceptional condition arises to compel changes in the growers' plans. Unforseen losses to fall planted grains, flood losses, or an unfavorable season for planting may, though rarely, necessitate his switching to other staples or to late season crops. But changes due to these exceptional circumstances can be determined with a close approach to accuracy through later circular inquiry of representative farmers in the different sections.

If the inquiry is made so early that the farmer's plans for the new plantings are still doubtful it becomes necessary in order to obtain some dependable basis to ask the plantings for the past year, as well as the plantings made or intended for the present year. This doubles the number of answers to be tabulated and computed but involves no particular difficulty to the farmer over the inquiry for one year. In asking for two years the acres of winter grains planted as well as the acres harvested may be asked for the past year. The previous fall plantings for the current year should be asked and the abandonment also if the assessment is not made too early.

Livestock. In most states livestock is subject to taxation and the different classes appear in the regular assessment blank. It is needless to ask these same questions in connection with the agricultural inquiry, as the farmer will simply repeat the figures already given. If the livestock

assessment queries do not cover all of the items considered essential, the agricultural inquiry might supplement the former to the extent needed, asking, for instance, number of cows over two years of age kept for milking, in case milk cows are included with other cattle as one item in the assessment inquiry proper. It might be preferable to amend the assessment blank. If certain classes or ages are exempt from taxation, information concerning them should nevertheless be required.

While the extent of understatement for taxable property like livestock is great, especially where holdings are large and the animals are ranged or held under conditions where concealment is easy, yet even in this deception there is a degree of uniformity which gives to the figures of reported livestock a reasonable comparability, so that they will at least give definite indications of the tendency toward increase or decrease, and after checks have established the degree of understatement for the different classes, they will also indicate approximate absolute totals.

In other words, while understatement of the facts is inevitable in varying degree according to differences in state laws and conditions, the figures supply valuable relative results, which permit close estimates of absolute numbers,

Furthermore if these original returns come into the hands of the state secretary of agriculture who is deeply concerned in their bearings and consequently in their accuracy, the ensuing questioning, appeal and encouragement to assessors results in a constant improvement in the completeness and accuracy of subsequent returns.

Draft.

The statistical statement mentioned in the foregoing section shall contain among other things answers to the following questions:

Name of and post office address of farmer (owner or operator); total acres in farm or property; (if considered necessary insert here "acres harvested of each crop the preceding year"); acres of tillable land used exclusively for pasture; acres sown or planted or intended to be sown or planted to each crop for the harvest of the then present year; number of head of each kind and class of livestock not subject to assessment or not so classified for assessment as to furnish necessary data regarding the livestock industry; number of growing fruit trees and vines of bearing age; and such other statistics relating to agriculture as may be required by the state secretary of agriculture.

SUBJECT III.

Duties of State Office to Provide Blanks and Instructions.

Kansas.

"Section 681. Blanks. The state board of agriculture shall furnish to each county clerk, for the assessors, such blanks and statistical rolls, in duplicate, as may be necessary to take the enumeration and to make complete returns of statistical information provided for in this Act."

"Section 683. Duty of the state board of agriculture. The state board of agriculture is hereby required to carry into effect the provisions of this act relating to agricultural statistics and to provide blanks and to distribute the same to the county clerks, who shall deliver them to the assessors, so that the enumeration may begin on the first day of March, and be taken with reference to that day in each and every county, and to prepare and distribute at the same time printed instructions defining and explaining the duties of the assessor in collecting the statistics required by this Act."

Wisconsin.

"The department of agriculture shall prepare and furnish to the proper officers such blanks and instructions as may be necessary for the proper carrying out of the provisions of this section."

Ohio.

Section 1097, copied under Subject I, which is supplemental to the main law, requires the assessor to furnish "to the best of his ability" agricultural data requested by the secretary of agriculture "upon blanks furnished by him". The main agricultural inquiry is a part of the regular assessment form.

North Dakota.

"Section 1905". (In part). "Each assessor shall***secure the information***as specified on the blanks furnished him by the state statistician***. The county auditor shall furnish to each assessor in his county such blanks as may be necessary for taking such statements, which blanks shall be furnished by the state statistician to the county auditors, together with printed instructions explaining the duties of the assessor in collecting the statistics aforesaid***."

"Section 1910. The expenses incurred in procuring and furnishing the necessary blanks, stationery and postage and compiling and publishing the statistics herein required, shall be paid by the state treasurer on the warrant of the state auditor, which shall be issued on the presentation of the account of the state statistician duly verified, when approved by the Governor."

Nebraska.

"6442 Section 154.--Abstract prepared by assessor.--The county assessor immediately after the board of equalization shall have completed its labors, shall prepare an abstract of the assessment rolls of his county on blanks to be furnished by the state board,***.

Utah.

"Section 2427 X 7. County assessors to get statement. Blank form. Each county assessor or his deputies***shall require each person*** to make a statistical statement of the previous year, as indicated on blanks furnished by the bureau (state bureau of statistics) as follows: Agriculture***" See Subject II.

Comments.

That the data should be gathered on a uniform blank and under uniform instructions and that these can best be prepared by the state secretary of agriculture, is evident.

The practice of making the questions a part of the assessment form as in Ohio prevents their being overlooked and in that state rather insures their being answered because of the penalty proviso, but can be commended in no other particular. The practice in some states of requiring individual statistical blanks for each farm is equally faulty and lacks the one sole merit noted of the Ohio provision. Both require that all of the data must be later transferred to summary sheets, a time consuming operation, and one certain to involve many errors in transcribing. This insures delay in receipt of the data by the state office and leaves the latter no means of checking or interpreting doubtful reports or of detecting the numerous errors that are found to exist in much the greater proportion

of such returns. It lays upon the county auditor work which is not related to his [illegible] problems and which is correspondingly apt to be neglected. Theoretically the county officer should be able to detect and correct many errors in the original work of the assessors, practically he will rarely do so but instead many errors additional to the original ones are liable to creep in during the work of tabulating and summarizing this material. The trained workers in the state office, whose interest is in the work and who possess comparable records for past years, will more quickly detect discrepancies and effect corrections than the average county auditor. The more people compelled to handle or review the data on its way to the state department the greater the delay necessarily and the more it is altered in form and summarized before reaching its ultimate destination the less the probability of completeness and accuracy. Therefore, it is highly desirable that the original data be sent direct to the state department, and immediately upon completion by the assessors, with a definite and not too liberal time limit, as the value of the material is largely proportional to its timeliness.

But as the average state has upwards of 150,000 farms, the handling of individual reports for each farm would be beyond the power of most state departments if submitted as separate individual reports. This difficulty can be overcome so that the work can be handled by township units, with the possibility of examining the returns in detail if necessary to detect errors, etc., by the adoption of a simplified form of summary sheet for the original entries, being composed of sheets each capable of holding the individual records of thirty or more farms with total spaces for the group, which group totals in turn make up the township totals.

Attached is a sample of such a summary sheet which will indicate its general form. Such sheets, printed on both sides, can be bound into township books with appropriate flexible covers.

Such means of record insure prompt return to the state department, a minimum amount of error in the original data and the possibility of detecting it when present, as well as the opportunity to insure accuracy in the computations leading up to the county totals.

Furthermore, these original records are a mine of information in the frequent cases where comprehensive special data for stated districts or counties are required.

By reference to the files of such returns for past years omission, which are the most frequent and serious defect in all forms of enumerations, may be detected and remedied.

The township and county officials will still have the benefit of a yearly summary of the progress and present state of agriculture in their respective jurisdictions.

Draft.

The state department of agriculture shall furnish to each county auditor for the assessors, such blanks and instructions as may be necessary to collect and make complete returns of the statistical information provided for in this act.

SUBJECT IV.

Compensation.

Kansas.

"Section 685. The services herein required to be performed by the several assessors in the state shall be performed at the same time that he performs his services under the general assessment laws of the state, and in connection therewith and he shall not be allowed for such services separately but for the time employed in taking the census herein provided and for making general assessment, as one and the same service."

"Section 9361. Compensation of Assessors."

This section provides for assessors in counties under 25,000 population $5.00 per day for the time actually and necessarily employed; in counties over 25,000 and under 40,000, $900 per annum, in counties over 40,000 $1200 per annum, and for deputy assessors $3.00 per day for the time actually and necessarily employed, all such compensation being paid by the county and covering the assessment work proper as well as the incidental work of collecting statistics.

Wisconsin.

No special provision for compensation for this work but they receive their regular per diem for the extra time.

"Section 851. Town assessors shall be paid such compensation, not exceeding $3.00 per day, as may be allowed them by the town board; provided, that assessors in all towns in counties having a population of 150,000 inhabitants or upwards shall be paid such compensation not exceeding $5.00 per day as may be allowed them by the town board of such respective towns."

Ohio.

"Section 3364. The compensation of assessors and assistant assessors which shall be paid out of the county treasury, shall be $4.00 per day for each day of not less than eight hours of actual service they are necessarily engaged in the performance of their duties. Each assessor and assistant assessors shall make and file with the county auditor a statement giving in detail the date of each on which he was necessarily engaged in the performance of his duties, the number of hours he worked each day and verify by oath, which oath the county auditor may administer. If the county auditor is satisfied that such statement is correct he shall draw his warrant on the county treasurer for the amount thereof. No such warrant shall be drawn until such assessor or assistant assessor has filed with the county auditor all the statementss and returns of property listed by him, the lists of the owners of the property, the statistics and enumerations required of him by law, and the county auditor is satisfied that the same are as full and accurate as could be made. The county auditor shall fix the time within which such officers shall complete their work and they shall not receive compensation for a longer period, unless the county auditor for good cause shown shall extend the same."

"Section 1097." (In part).

**** No additional expense shall accrue because of the provisions of this section. The service performed agreeable to this section shall be considered a part of the duties of assessing officers. Each assessing officer before receiving compensation for services rendered shall file with the county auditor a written statement that to the best of his ability he has complied with the provisions of this section."

This last provision is a part of the supplemental law providing for additional agricultural statistics. The present main statistical inquiry is a part of the regular assessment blank and as such an integral part of such assessment and has been so for a long period of years.

North Dakota.

"Section 1906. The services herein required of the several assessors shall be performed at the same time that they list property for taxation. They shall not be paid for such services separately but for the time employed in collecting such statistics and for listing property for taxation, they shall be allowed and paid the same per diem for the discharge of the services required herein as is now or shall hereafter be provided for listing property for taxation,***."

Nebraska.

No special provision for compensation, the work being considered a part of the regular assessment, as in Kansas, but as precinct assessors receive a per diem of three dollars for time employed, no difficulty arises.

"2451. Section 31.--Assessors.--*** the compensation of the precinct assessors shall be three dollars per day for the time actually and necessarily employed in the discharge of their duties.****."

Utah.

No additional compensation is provided for this work.

"Section 2050. When Fixed. The board of county commissioners of each county shall biennially at a meeting held at least three months prior to the election for county officers, fix and determine the salaries of county officers, for whom maximum salaries are fixed, for the two years next succeeding:****."

COMMENTS.

The Kansas law considers the gathering of agricultural statistics as a part of the regular work of the assessor, the deputy assessors receiving three dollars per day, probably collect most of these data.

Where the assessor is allowed a per diem for the time actually employed, which is the case also in Wisconsin, Ohio, and North Dakota, no difficulty should be experienced, since the assessor will receive his regular daily compensation for the additional work. In cases where the assessor receives a fixed sum for the annual assessment and a requirement for the collection of a statistical data is introduced his allowance should be increased proportional to the additional time required for him for the extra work or a small allowance should be paid for each statement. If ten cents should be specified for each fare, and this is the maximum that has been suggested this would amount to only one hundred to three hundred dollars for average counties, a small sum considering the great value of the information to the township, county and state, as political units, and to their farmers and business men. It is quite useless to attempt to inaugurate this work as an addition to the duties of the assessor with any hope that the results will prove satisfactory unless the latter feels that he is being treated fairly. Otherwise, even if a law is obtained making this mandatory, indifference on his part will certainly vitiate the value of the returns, and if the law is enforced, his influence in the legislature will effect its subsequent repeal.

The per diem allowance for time actually and necessarily employed has decided advantages over the per annum salary, being fair to both the assessor and the community, and where it is in effect, there should be no difficulty

with the assessors, who should rather welcome this increase in their duties with corresponding increase in their pay.

The Ohio law quoted is the general law for compensation of assessors and is a very good type. The North Dakota law related specifically to compensation for collection of statistical data.

Most states will be satisfied with their present laws for compensation of assessors and no attempt to alter them is advisable unless a change seems essential to the success in the collection of these statistics.

Draft.

The services herein required of the several assessors shall be performed at the same time that they list property for taxation. They shall not be paid for such services separately but for the time employed in collecting such statistics and for listing property for taxation, they should be allowed and paid the same per diem as is now or shall hereafter be provided for listing property for taxation..

Or, substitute,-

The services herein required of the several assessors shall be performed at the same time that they list property for taxation. For such service they should be allowed and paid an additional sum of (5 to 10) cents for each farm or property separately listed.

SUBJECT V.

PENALTIES.

Kansas.

"Section 68b. Penalty for Neglect. Any assessor who shall willfully neglect or refuse in whole or in part to perform the duties required in this act shall be guilty of misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum of not less than twenty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars."

Wisconsin.

"Section 1015. (extract) ____ if any assessor shall have failed or neglected to---make and file with the county clerk the certificate required by section 1010, for 10 days after the time he is required by law to transmit or make the same, the county clerk shall in either case send a messenger to such--assessor who has so failed or neglected to procure the same and such messenger shall be entitled to receive three dollars per day and ten cents per mile for each mile necessarily traveled in the discharge of his duty, to be paid out of the county treasury on the order of the chairman of the county board and county clerk. The amount so paid shall be charged to the proper town , city, or village and added to and collected with the next county tax apportioned thereto. The county clerk shall immediately after having sent any such messenger, notify the treasurer of the proper town, city, or village of the amount of the expense so incurred, and such treasurer shall deduct such amount from the compensation of such delinquent assessor."

"Section 1019. (extract) ---every assessor who shall fail or neglect to perform any duty required of him by any of the provisions of this chapter shall, for every such neglect or failure, forfeit not less than twenty nor more than fifty dollars, and it shall be the duty of the county clerk to cause every such forfeiture to be prosecuted for."

Ohio.

Section 3364 already quoted under the heading of compensation, provides

"No such warrant (for services) shall be drawn until such assessor*** has filed with the county auditor***the statistics and enumerations required of him by law, and the county aulitor is satisfied that the same are as full and accurate as could be made."

The state has no other provision for a penalty for failure to collect these data. But as the compensation is on a just basis and particularly since the statistical statement is a part of the assessment blank which the farmer is required to render under oath, under penalty of a fifty per cent increase in his tax assessment for omissions, which penalty seems not to apply to the statistics but is probably assumed by the farmer to cover them also, little difficulty appears to be experienced.

North Dakota.

"Section 1906." (In part)

" ******provided that an assessor shall receive no pay for services as assessor except on presenting a certificate from the county auditor that he has fully complied with the requirements of the foregoing section, and it is the duty of the county auditor when any assessor fails to make proper and complete returns of the statistics required herein, to withhold such certificate until the work is fully and properly completed, and to return forthwith the blanks to such assessor, indicating to him the deficiencies in such statistics and what is needed by way of correction, and shall specify a reasonable time within which such assessor shall fully complete the work and return the same to the county auditor; and it shall be the duty of the assessor immediately to carry out the instructions of such auditor and return the statistics completed within the time prescribed. In case of his failure to comply with such requirements such assessor shall forfeit all compensation and be subject to the penalties prescribed in the next section; and it is the duty of the county auditor to enter complaint against such assessor and the state's attorney of the county shall prosecute the same; and any judgement or penalty so recovered against any such assessor shall be a lien against all real and personal property owned by such assessor. In case any assessor fails to complete such statistics and return the same to the county auditor within the time prescribed after they have been returned to him by the county auditor with the proper instructions for completing such county auditor shall appoint some suitable person to collect or complete the statistics for the district and such appointee shall perform such work as provided in the case of a regular chosen assessor and shall be entitled to compensation at the same rate to be paid as provided for assessors. The failure of any county auditor to require the complete performance of duty by assessors as herein provided or to enter complaint against any assessor who shall fail to perform his duty as herein provided, shall be deemed a misdemeanor and such auditor shall be liable to the penalties prescribed in the next section.

"Section 1907. (Penalty for neglect or refusal) Any assessor or county auditor who shall willfully neglect or refuse in whole or in part to perform the duties required in the foregoing sections, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum not less than twenty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars."

"Section 165. Any person who willfully impeded or obstructs the commissioner in the full and free performance of his duty shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than ten and not more than fifty dollars, or by imprisonment of not less than seven and not more than than thirty days in the county jail, or by both. The refusal or neglect of any person for himself or for any person, firm, company or corporation of which he may be a member or agent, to furnish the information or statistical statement required to be furnished to assessors shall be construed to be a violation of the provisions of this section, and it is

hereby made the duty of the county auditor to report such violations with the names and post office address and place of residence of the violators as furnished him by the assessor to the state's attorney for the county in which such violations occurred, and the State's attorney shall forthwith proceed to enforce the penalty provided in this section against such persons; and he is hereby authorized to subpoena the assessor and such other witnesses as may be necessary, and to introduce the assessors returns in evidence."

"Section 1903. **** Each assessor shall make an alphabetical list of names of the persons refusing to make such statement, with their post office addresses, which list he shall return to the county auditor."

Statement. The full section is quoted under Subject I.

Nebraska.

No special provisions for penalty.

Utah.

No special provisions for penalty.

COMMENTS.

The matter of penalty is a most difficult question. The usual trouble with laws imposing penalties is that enforcement is not automatic even though so intended. Someone is required to take action against the delinquent, and few men will do this unless personally and deeply interested in the work, the success of which is threatened by the delinquent official. Even then it is usually necessary for him to act through second or more remote agencies, so that the force of the original protest is often all but lost. The men charged with enforcing penalties are often dependent upon the good will of the offender for reelection or other favors. It is desirable to have a law that will be self enforcing, if such a law can be devised.

The North Dakota law comes very near to this in theory, but in practice even its excellent provisions are ineffective because of failure to apply the penalties provided. The best law fails without a diligent enforcement, while a poor law may meet the necessities when invoked and backed by an earnest and courageous official.

The provision that payment shall be withheld until the assessor presents a certificate from the auditor certifying that complete and full returns have been made , of the statistics required, might be strengthened by requiring this certificate from the state secretary of agriculture, to be mailed to the assessor within a stated time after receipt of the statistical data in satisfactory form. Or a part of his compensation might be withheld. Provision for collection by a substitute assessor, at the expense of the original assessor, is desirable as a last resort. If payment were made for the statistical enumeration from a state fund this might prove a partial solution, but this might in turn produce other complications, since assessors are distinctly local officials, and might also block the passage of any law for collection of statistics, owing to the call for an appropriation.

A penalty for the county auditor for failure to carry out the provisions of the law is covered by general laws in most states. In case no such provision exists, draft of a section providing for a penalty is given.

No penalty is recommended for the farmer. Some provision, such as the one in the North Dakota law, may be desirable to compel farmers to furnish the information, though little difficulty will be met with in this particular if the suggestions under Subject II. "subjects of inquiry" for few, simple, essential, and noninquisitorial questions, are heeded. But if a penalty is added it is desirable that it be one reasonably certain of enforcement, the fact of enforcement being more important than the details of the penalty. A percent of increase on the assessment made, as a penalty for refusal of statistical information, has been suggested, but the legality of such a provision in some states, is questionable.

The best results have been realized in the last couple of years by enlisting the interest of county officials and public agencies, but this has helped by the war situation making appeal to public spirit.

In Wisconsin, with practically no provision of penalty, the State was able by means of propaganda, cooperation of many public agencies, and continued insistence on the part of the State Department of Agriculture, to get for the year 1918 probably as complete returns as were ever received by any State, all but 5 townships.

Draft.

"No warrant to a township assessor in payment for services as assessor shall be drawn by the county auditor until such assessor has fully complied with the requirements of sections _____(Those requiring collection of statistical data) as evidenced by a certificate from the State Department of Agriculture that all such required statistical returns have been received, complete and in proper form, which said certificate the State Department of Agriculture shall mail to him within five days after receipt of such complete and proper returns, or, if not complete and in proper form they shall be returned by the State Department of Agriculture through the county auditor to the assessor within the same period with specific mention of the deficiencies in such statistics and full instructions for their correction. In case any assessor failed to complete such statistics as required by the Secretary of Agriculture and to return them to the latter within fifteen days the county auditor shall upon request of the Department of Agriculture appoint some suitable person to collect or complete the statistics for the township and such appointee shall perform such work as provided in the case of a regular chosen assessor and shall be entitled to compensation at the rate of ____ per diem, the amount of such payment to such substitute assessor to be deducted from the amount of the compensation that would have been due the regular assessor in the event that he had discharged all of his duties in full, any balance remaining to be paid to the original assessor provided his duties have otherwise been satisfactorily discharged."

(If no statute providing proper penalties for neglect of duty by county officials exists that can be invoked in case of their failure to observe the foregoing provisions regarding payments to assessors, it might be desirable to provide a section similar to the following:)

"Any county auditor (or other official) who shall wilfully refuse or fail in whole or in part to observe and perform any duty imposed upon him by the provisions of this act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined in a sum of not less than twenty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, such penalty to be enforced by the State's Attorney upon complaint of the State Secretary of Agriculture."

(If a penalty for the farmer is considered desirable, a straight penalty may be provided as in the North Dakota law, or, if it is possible to impose a per cent of increase on his assessment for refusal of information, the following is suggested.)

"If the information required concerning any farm, property or business is refused by the owner or operator, or by his manager or agent, the assessor shall note upon the assessment blank of the person, firm or corporation refusing to give such information the fact of such refusal and in each such case there shall be added to such assessment ten percentum of the total original amount of such assessment."

SUBJECT VI.

State Department to Assemble and Publish Data.

Kansas.

"Section 683" (In part). "***When the returns of such statistics are made, the state board of agriculture shall cause the same to be classified***and publish the same as a part of the annual transaction of the state board of agriculture, and to lay the same before the legislature at the next session thereof."

Wisconsin.

"Section 1458-3. It shall be the duty of the department of agriculture and it shall have power, jurisdiction and authority;

(1) To promote the interests of agriculture, dairy, horticulture, manufactures, and domestic arts.

(2) **********

(3) To collect from the several counties in this state information concerning the extent, condition and prices of farm crops; the number, conditions of health and value of farm animals, prevailing conditions of weather, and such other information as it may deem of practical value to the agricultural interests of the state, and to publish monthly statements of such reports, for free distribution among the farmers and other interested parties of the state."

Ohio.

"Section 1095. The secretary of agriculture may collect and disseminate such information relative to agriculture, agricultural labor, waste and uncultivated land, undeveloped resources and decrease of rural population as he may deem wise for the purpose of promoting agricultural productions within the state."

North Dakota.

"Section 1909. (Duty of state statistician.) The state statistician is hereby required to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing sections relating to the collection and compilation annually of the statistical data therein mentioned, and he shall cause the returns when received to be arranged, classified and published in the best and most convenient manner in order to exhibit the annual growth and developments of each county in the state."

"Section 1910. (Expenses to be paid by the state.) The expenses incurred in procuring and furnishing the necessary blanks, stationery and postage and compiling and publishing the statistical information herein required, shall be paid by the state treasurer on the warrant of the state auditor, which shall be issued on the presentation of the account of the state statistician duly verified, when approved by the governor."

"Section 169--State statistician.--The commissioner of agriculture and labor shall be the state statistician. It shall be his duty to obtain from assessors and other officers of the organized counties of the state, and to collate and prepare in tabulated form for reference, statistics showing the assessed valuation of all real and personal property, the acreage and yield of all kinds of grain and tame grasses; the number of horses, cattle, sheep, and other livestock, and other information pertaining to and showing the condition of the growth, development and resources of the state by counties."

Nebraska.

"Section 59.--Duties of the bureau.--The duties of the bureau shall be to collect, collate and publish agricultural statistics and material resources of the state, and furnish statistical or other collected information to the press and the public upon request."

"Section 61.--Reports by county clerks.--It shall be the duty of the county clerk on or before the first day of July in each year to forward a summary of such reports of their respective counties to the secretary of the state board of agriculture at Lincoln, who shall compile said reports and embody them in his annual report to the governor."

Utah.

"Section 3. Duties. It shall be, and is hereby made, the duty of said commissioner to collect and compile and present in annual reports to the governor all reliable data and information at his command, concerning the climate, soil and various resources of the state, its agricultural, horticultural, mineral, timber and grazing lands and commercial industries and the development thereof; the water courses and lakes of the state in reference to irrigation, manufacturing, mechanical and other uses, the various crop products, and the adaptability of different soils and localities for the production of different crops; the number, kinds and value of domestic animals in the state, with useful information regarding the same*** and generally, any information which if disseminated abroad would tend to the development of the state by inducing population and capital to come within its borders. Said commissioner shall also inform himself in regard to suitable locations for agricultural and horticultural colonies in the state and use all facilities at his command for encouraging and promoting desirable enterprises of this kind.***He should also open correspondence with and answer any and all inquiries from those seeking information in regard to the resources of the state; he shall, whenever practicable, and when funds are available, for such purposes, organize and encourage local exhibits at such points as would tend to advertise the resources of the state."

Missouri.

"Section 601. Duties of Board. ***It shall be the duty of the board, through its secretary, to gather crop and stock statistics, meteorological data and information as to the best and most profitable means of farming, stock-raising, fruit-growing, etc., and publish the same in bulletins as frequently as may be deemed expedient;***".

Comments.

The Kansas law is comprehensive and definite, as is that of North Dakota The Utah law is very full and definite on the duties of the state department, but affords that agency no power to enforce the collection of the data needed for adequate compliance. The Missouri law is sufficiently general to permit of extended activities by the State Board but entirely lacking in any provision for collection of the needed basic data.

An important part of the work of State Departments of Agriculture is and should be to furnish to those interested dependable information concerning the agricultural resources of the different counties and districts, particularly as to the capacities of their soils, as shown by the average yields of the different crops, and regarding the status of agriculture in each, as evidenced by the kind and relative acreage of the crops grown, thevolume of production, the prices received by growers for crops and livestock, etc. The executive and legislative officials of the State look to the State Department for facts to guide them in relation to agricultural matters. This makes it desirable that this really leading phase of the departments work should be clearly set forth. The possibilities and benefits of this line of work are indicated in the summary of the work done in Wisconsin, on page_____. The importance of these duties is obvious, and if they are given formal expression in the laws of the State the need for their execution can be more strongly set forth and the collection of the necessary data the more surely and satisfactorily enforced.

This may be the proper place also for providing the funds needed for necessary printing of blanks and instructions for handling, assembling and analizing the returns and for preparing and publishing the reports.

As the duties of the department of agriculture vary so greatly in the different States and are generally now set forth in considerable detail, no special draft is suggested. The laws quoted and the preceding comments may afford suggestions for improvement.

General summary with drafts of sections and complete laws.

The drafts suggested under the various subjects preceding, and here summarized, have been drawn partly with a view to their use as a basis for strengthening weak sections in laws otherwise satisfactory. This is usually more easily accomplished than to secure the passage of an entire new law. Such introductory and enacting clauses as might be customary in the several states would, of course, need to be added in fitting them into the body of the state law. If a complete new law is desired the forms of the second or third draft are considered preferable. These are intended as working drafts, rather than models, to be altered and improved according to the states conditions and needs.

Summary of Drafts Under Preceding Subjects:

Subject 1.

It shall be the duty of each township (county, village, town) assessor of this state at the time of listing property for taxation each year, to ascertain for each farm or property in his assessor district the facts relating to agriculture, horticulture and stock raising as specified and in the manner provided herein and in the instructions given by the state secretary of agriculture, including such other related statistical returns, not herein mentioned, as may be required by the secretary of agriculture.

Each assessor shall gather the statistics mentioned in section_____ by a personal visit to each farm or property in his township and by a personal interview with the owner or operator, or with his manager or agent if any can be found, but, if not, then he shall obtain such information from the most reliable source. The completed entries should be read back to the informant, to detect errors if present.

The statistical returns referred to herein shall be collected by the assessor as specified in blanks and instructions furnished by the state secretary of agriculture through the county auditor and shall be returned by the assessor direct to the said state secretary immediately upon completion of his assessments and in no case later than_____, summary of same being at the same time delivered by the assessor to the township clerk and one to the county auditor.

Subject 11.

The statistical statement mentioned in the foregoing section shall contain among other things answers to the following questions:

Name of and postoffice address of farmer (owner or operator) total acres in farm or property; (if considered necessary insert here "acres harvested of each crop the preceding year"): acres of tillable land used exclusively for pasture; acres sown or planted or intended to be sown or planted to each crop for the harvest of the then present year; number of head of each kind and class of livestock not subject to assessment or not so classified for assessment as to furnish necessary data regarding the livestock industry; number of growing fruit trees and vines of bearing age; and such other statistics relating to agriculture as may be required by the state secretary of agriculture.

Subject 111.

The state department of agriculture shall furnish to each county auditor for the assessors, such blanks and instructions as may be necessary to collect and make complete returns of the statistical information provided for in this act.

Subject 1V.

The services herein required of the several assessors shall be performed at the same time that they list property for taxation. They shall not be paid for suchsservices separately but for the time employed in collecting such statistics and for listing property for taxation, they shall be allowed and paid the same per diem as is now or shall hereafter be provided for listing property for taxation; (Or:-)

The services herein required of the several assessors shall be performed at the same time that they list property for taxation. For such service they shall be allowed and paid an additional sum of (5 to 10) cents for each farm or property separately listed.

Subject V.

No warrant to a township assessor in payment for services as assessor shall be drawn by the county auditor until such assessor has fully complied with the requirements of sections_____ (those requiring collection of statistical data) as evidenced by a certificate from the state department of agriculture that all such required statistical returns have been received complete and in proper form, which said certificate the state department of agriculture shall mail to him within five days after receipt at the state department of such complete and proper returns, or, if not complete and in proper form they shall be returned by the state department of agriculture through the county auditor to the assessor within the same period with specific mention of the deficiencies in such statistics and full instructions for their correction. In case any assessor fails to complete such statistics as required by the secretary of agriculture and to return them to the latter within fifteen days the county auditor shall upon request of the department of agriculture appoint some suitable person to collect or complete the statistics for the township and such appointee shall be entitled to compensation at the rate of_____per diem, the amount of such payment to such substitute assessor to be deducted from the amount of the compensation that would have been due the regular assessor in the event that he had discharged all of his duties, any balance remaining to be paid to the

original assessor, provided his duties have otherwise been satisfactorily discharged.

(If no statute providing proper penalties for neglect of duty by county officials exists that can be invoked in case of their failure to observe the foregoing provisions regarding payments to assessors, it might be desirable to provide a section similar to the following:)

> Any county auditor or other officer who shall willfully refuse or fail in whole or in part to observe and perform any duty imposed upon him by the provisions of this act shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined in a sum of not less than twenty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars, such penalty to be enforced by the state's attorney upon complaint of the state's secretary of agriculture.

(If a penalty for the farmer is considered desirable, a straight penalty may be provided as in the North Dakota law or, if it is possible to impose a percent of increase on his assessment for refusal of information, the following is suggested.)

> "If the information required concerning any farm, property, or business is refused by the owner or operators, or by his manager or agent, the assessor shall note upon the assessment blank of the person, firm or corporation refusing to give such information the fact of such refusal and in each such case there shall be added to such assessment ten percentum of the total original amount of such assessment."

Subject V1.

No special draft suggested.

Drafts of Brief Complete Laws.

If a new law is deemed necessary it is often easier to have one enacted that is brief and compact but carries the necessary powers than one longer and more in detail. A short law also usually gives wider discretionary powers to the officer charged with its enforcement, which is particularly desirable in this work, owing to the constantly changing problems of agriculture and the presumed special qualifications of the state secretary of agriculture for altering the scope of the inquiries to meet such changes.

A brief outline of such a law therefore follows:

SECTION_____. It shall be the duty of the assessor of each township at the time of taking the annual assessment of property for taxation, to ascertain for each farm and property in his assessment district, on blanks to be prepared and furnished by the secretary of agriculture, with proper instructions printed thereon, the following statistics regarding agriculture in the then present year.

First: Name and post office address of farmer (owner or operator)
Second: Total acres in farm or property.
Third: Acres of each crop sown or planted or intended to be sown or planted for harvest.
Fourth: Acres of tillable land used exclusively for pasture.
Fifth: Number of growing fruit trees and vines of bearing age.
Sixth: Numbers and classes of livestock.
Seventh: Such other statistics relating to agriculture as may be required by the secretary of agriculture from year to year.

SECTION_____. Each supervisor shall gather the statistics mentioned in Section_____by a personal interview with the owner or operator, or with his manager or agent, if any can be found, but, if not , then he shall obtain such information from the most reliable source. (following sentence optional). If the information required concerning any farm, property or business is refused by the owner or operator, or by his manager or agent the assessor shall note upon the assessment blank of the person, firm or corporation refusing to give such information the fact of such refusal and in each such case there shall be added to such assessment ten percentum of the total original amount of such assessment.

Immediately upon the completion of his assessment work, but not later than July 15, each assessor shall return direct to the secretary of agriculture, the original blanks or books on which the statistics called for in section___are recorded. The secretary of agriculture shall have such statistics tabulated and publish same together with final estimates of production, prices and other available data, not later than the 1st of January following.

No warrant to a township assessor in payment for services for assessment work shall be drawn until he has fully complied with the requirements of section _____as evidenced by a certificate from the secretary of agriculture that the statistical returns required herein have been received by him, complete and in proper form, which said certificate the secretary of agriculture shall mail to the assessor within five days after receipt at the state department of such complete and proper returns, or, if not complete and in proper form they shall be returned by the secretary of agriculture, through the county auditor, to the assessor within the same period with specific mention of the deficiencies in such statistics and full instructions for their correction.

If still further abridgement is desired, the following draft may form a basis:

It shall be the duty of the assessor of each township at the time of taking the annual assessment of property to ascertain for each farm and properties in his assessment district the acreage of each farm crop and such other statistics in relation to the principal farm products and agricultural resources as may be required by the state secretary of agriculture, as specified in blanks and instructions furnished by the latter, such statistics to be forwarded to the department of agriculture immediately after the assessment is completed, and not later than_____.

The secretary of agriculture shall within five days after their receipt forward to the assessor a certificate that the statistical reports from said assessor have been received and appear to be complete and in proper form, or else he shall within the same period returns the reports through the county auditor to the assessor for necessary indicated corrections, and no warrant shall be drawn by the county auditor to such assessor for pay for servides as assessor until the said statistics are fully and properly completed as evidenced by the certificate of the state secretary of agriculture.

If no provision exists in the present laws for appointment of a substitute assessor who would collect these data in case the original assessor fails to do so, a clause such as that shown under Subject V might be included here. It is assumed that disregard of this law by the county auditor would subject him to the penalties under the general laws relating to his duties, otherwise this may be covered as suggested under Subject V. Unless the assessor receives a perdiem wage for his services it may be necessary to provide for reasonable additional compensation. See suggestions under Subject IV. The duties of the department of agriculture, re publications, etc, are assumed to be covered by existing laws.

State and Federal Cooperation in Crop Reporting.

As this is a matter closely related to the foregoing, it seems advisable to treat of it briefly here.

Among the many advantages of such cooperation are these:

To the State Department.

The advice and assistante of a trained statistical specialist.

The benefit of the Bureau's wide knowledge of statistical methods, gained through fifty years of experience in its broad field of work.

Immediate touch with the treasures of agricultural statistics accumulated by the Bureau, one of them most complete collections of agricultural statistics in the world.

The benefit of a permanent agency in intimate touch with the state's statistical records, policy and plans, to bridge the change from one state administration to another, thus assuring the continuity and comparability of its statistical records.

Prompt knowledge of developments made in other states in this field of work that might with benefit be adapted to its own needs.

Benefit of the Field Agents extensive travel and personal observations throughout the state in editing returns and determining correct county averages.

Benefit of the Field agents investigations, in solving the statistical problems of the state office.

Use of the Bureau's frank in the collection and distribution of joint inquiries and publications.

Improvement in the accuracy, fulness and comparability of the statistics collected by assessors, through the interest, advice and assistance of the Field Agent.

To the Federal Bureau.

Prompt use of assessors improved acreage figures as a check against its preliminary estimates of acreages.

Access to enlarged lists of individuals capable of reporting on special phases of agriculture.

Clerical assistance in handling larger list of reporters.

Use of state equipment, for duplicating or printing and mailing reports to enlarged lists of papers and individuals interested.

Assistance of state agencies in stimulating interest of producers in the preparation, distribution and proper use and benefits of crop reports.

Courtesies that can be shown by the state to voluntary crop reporters, that will assist to arouse and maintain interest and enthusiasm.

To Both.

Avoidance of duplication of effort.

Avoidance of divergence of results.

Greater absolute accuracy in reports.

Fuller confidence of public.

Greater development of the work.

Full county and district data.

Makes each state report comparable with that of every other.

Comprehensive repprts on crops locally important but not of general interest outside the state.

Reduces combined clerk hire and printing expenses.

Generally, greater public benefit.

No special authorization of law is necessary in most states to permit of such cooperation, the general laws creating state departments usually permitting of cooperative arrangements with other agencies. If such authority appears to be needed, the following draft would probably answer.

"The state Secretary of Agriculture may enter into cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States Department of Agriculture for the joint compilation and publication of the crop and live stock reports mentioned in_____as well as other statistics relating to agriculture."

A copy of the formal agreement for cooperation between the Bureau of Crop Estimates and the State Department in Wisconsin follows. This is similar to the agreements with other states, though not identical, each being modified to meet the situation and special needs of the particular state.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

* * * *

AGREEMENT FOR COLLECTING, INTERPRETING, AND PUBLISHING CROP AND LIVESTOCK STATISTICS

IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN.

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into by and between the State of Wisconsin, by its Commissioner of Agriculture thereunto duly authorized, party of the first part, and the United States Department of Agriculture, for and in behalf of the said United States, party of the second part,

WHEREAS, the parties hereto, being engaged separately in the collecting, interpreting, and publishing of crop and livestock statistics in the State of Wisconsin, and;

WHEREAS, the party of the first part is desirous of securing the assistance and advice and the benefit of the experience and facilities of the party of the second part in collecting, interpreting, and publishing of crop and livestock statistics in the said State, to the end that the results achieved shall be of greater accuracy and authenticity, and;

WHEREAS, the party of the second part is desirous of securingthe assistance and availing itself of sources of information in the exclusive possession, of the party of the first part in carrying forward its work in crop and livestock reporting in the said State and securing wider publication and dissemination of its statistics when collected and interpreted.

NOW, THEREFORE, THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSETH:

FIRST, The party of the first part, for and in consideration of the promises and agreements of the party of the second part as hereinafter set forth, does hereby promise and agree as follows:

1. That the Commissioner of Agriculture of the State of Wisconsin and his assistants shall furnish to the field agent of the Bureau of Crop Estimates of the party of the second part in Wisconsin all such information concerning crop and livestock conditions in said State in his and their possession, or available to him or to them, as the said field agent may call for from time to time.

2. That the said Commissioner and his assistants shall render the said field agent all possible aid, advice, and assistance in making available to the said field agent all sources of information at his command and within his and their control concerning crop and livestock conditions in the State of Wisconsin as may be called for from time to time by the said field agent.

3. That the said Commissioner shall cause to be published, without expense to the party of the second part, in manner and form as he shall deem best, crop and livestock estimates for the State of Wisconsin as a whole and by counties and districts within the State as soon as possible after such estimates and information shall have been lawfully furnished him by the said field agent under authority of the crop reporting board of the said Bureau of Crop Estimates.

SECOND. The party of the second part, for and in consideration of the promises and agreements of the party of the first part as above set forth, does hereby promise and agree as follows:

1. To immediately telegraph to its field agent in Wisconsin the State totals for Wisconsin as determined from time to time by it s crop reporting board at Washington, D. C., as soon as released for publication.

2. To authorize itssaid field agent, immediately upon receipt by him of

the said State totals for Wisconsin, to convert his county averages, theretofore made and used as a basis for his report to said ceop reporting board, into numerical estimates conforming to the said State totals and at once furnish the same and the said Statee totals to the Wisconsin State Department of Agriculture for immediate publication as aforesaid.

THIRD. It is mutually understood and agreed by and between the parties hereto as follows:

1. That prior to the receipt by the field agent of the State totals as determined by the crop reporting board at Washington, D. C., no one shall have access to the State totals and averages except employees of the United States Department of Agriculture who are subject to the provisions of Section 123 of the Penal Laws of the United States approved March 4, 1909, which prohibits the giving out, directly or indirectly, in advance of officialo publication, of information "which might exert an influence upon or affect the market value of any product of the soil grown within the United States, which information is by law or the rules of the Department or office required to be withheld from publication until a fixed time."

2. That the parties hereto shallbe given credit, respectively or collectively, for assistance and information mutually furnished hereunder, in any schedule of inquiry or publication of results provided for herein.

3. That nothing herein shall be deemed to contemplate expenditures by the party of the second part in carrying out the provision of htis agreement during the current fiscal year, ending June 30, 1917, except as authorized in appropriations made by Congress for "GEneral Expenses, Bureau of Crop Estimates,"1917, nor thereafter during the life of this agreement except as authorized in appropriations made by Congress then available therefor.

4. That nothing in this agreement shall be construed as in any manner changing, altering, amending, or otherwise affecting the regulations or instructions of theparty of the second part governing the work of the said field agent or any of hes assistants, or as authority for him or any of them to carry on his or their work in a manner contrary to or in violation of such reculations and instructions.

5. That nothing herein, or the performance of the work contemplated hereunder, shall be used to the political advancement, aggrandizement, or advantage of any official or employee of the State of Wisconsin or otherwise.

6. That this agreement may be terminated by either party upon written notice to the other given thirty days in advance.

7. That this agreement shall take effect from and after its execution by both parties.

STATE OF WISCONSIN

(signed) by C. P. Norgood
Commissioner of Agriculture,
Party of the First Part.

(signed) by D. F. Houston
Secretary of Agriculture,
Party of the Second Part.

The Field Agent for Wisconsin, who also served as a State officer at a nominal salary, has summarized the practical workings of the plan in that state as follows:

An agreement was entered into between the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture in the spring of 1917 for the purpose of coordinating the work of both Department in the gathering of agricultural statistics and the making of crop and live stock estimates and reports for Wisconsin. At the same time a change was made in the law requiring assessors to gather agricultural statistics, and the Field Agent of the United States Department of Agriculture was made State Statistician for Wisconsin and put in charge of the Division of Agricultural Statistics of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

Prior to the changing of the law the returns from the assessors were very incomplete. A large percentage failed entirely to do the work and others made incomplete Reports. Furthermore, the assessors were only required to furnish a summary for the township to the County Clerk, who in turn was required by law to furnish a county summary to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. An investigation showed that in many of the counties the totals certified to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture as county totals failed to include a number of the townships, thus making the returns incomplete and unsatisfactory. Under the new law the books for gathering agricultural statistics are prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and furnished to the township assessors through the Assessors of Incomes (County Auditors). Each of these books contain space for from 100 to 300 names and are arranged to hold 35 farms to apage so that the returns for a township can be quickly tabulated. The assessors are required by law to send the original books to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. They are required to total the books before sending them in and to send a summary to the Township Clerk and also to the County Clerk. The books are always added again in the office of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and in this connection it may be stated that not more than one book in ten is found to be added correctly, mistakes running as high as two to three thousand acres having been found in a single township. This emphasizes the importance of having the tabulation of the original data supervised by someone trained in the handling of statistics and familiar with the State. Whenever a township book comes in which is incomplete or otherwise unsatisfactory, it is immediately returned to the assessor accompanied by a letter signed by the Commissioner of Agriculture containing instructions to complete the same and return it. At the same time the assessor of incomes, having supervision of that county, is notified. In many instances a representative of the Wisconsin Department of Africulture is able by a personal visit to the local assessor to get this report straightened out in good shape. While there is really no penalty provided so far in Wisconsin in case the assessor fails to make a report, the returns have been quite satisfactory. This is due in some measure to the simplicity of the report, only questions

regarding acreage, number of silos, and bees being included. Livestock re-returns, except milk cows, are taken from the returns to the Tax Commission. The returns are usually tabulated for the current year by November 1. Some counties are complete by September 1.

The combination of the State and Federal crop statistical work in Wisconsin has met with general approval and has greatly increased the confidence of the public in the crop reports. It has been possible to publish reasonably accurate county and state statistics which have been extensively used by many agencies, including the Agricultural College, the County Agricultural Agent, the Live Stock Growers Association, the Immigration Service, the railroads, and other commercial organizations. The importance of having accurate statistics for the State is coming to be realized more than ever before and the field of usefulness for such statistics is constantly increasing.

Joint county and state reports have been issued monthly since the two services were combined. These reports have been given very wide publicity in the city and county papers of the state. Through special articles, talks to farmers, conference with county agricultural agents, and in other ways the importance of statistics to the farmer himself in the marketing of his produce has been set forth and emphasized. This important work has only commenced. The annual report published last fall, of which 10,000 copies were printed, is being used rather widely in the schools and the report for 1918, which is now in the press, will probably be even more widely used as considerable historical data of a statistical nature have been included.